

Message Text

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SUBJECT: UNDER SECRETARIAL TASK FORCE ON U.S. FOOTWEAR:
CONTINUING IDENTIFICATION OF TRADE OPPORTUNITIES
FOR LEATHER SHOES AND BOOTS.

REF: STATE 45685.

1. SUMMARY: MARKET PROSPECTS FOR U.S. SHOES AND LEATHER BOOTS FOR SPECIAL CATEGORIES OF POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS AS INDICATED IN THE REFERENCED INSTRUCTIONS, HAVE BEEN EXPLORED BY THE EMBASSY IN ROME, THE AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL IN MILAN AND THE AMERICAN CONSULATE IN TURIN. VARIOUS CALLS WERE MADE TO THE ITALIAN ARMY, THE STATE POLICE, FIRE DEPARTMENTS, MUNICIPALITIES (FOR POLICE APPAREL), POSTAL SERVICE AND PRIVATE GUARD SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS. THEY USUALLY BUY DOMESTIC PRODUCTION AND REPORTEDLY NEVER HAD OPPORTUNITIES TO DEAL WITH FOREIGN SHOE MANUFACTURERS. CURRENT REGULATIONS ON GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT CONTAIN NO RESTRICTION AGAINST FOREIGN PRODUCTS BUT SET FORTH PROCEDURES ON GOVERNMENT TENDERS. THE MOST PERTINENT INFORMATION DEVELOPED DURING THE SUBJECT INQUIRIES IS REPORTED BELOW.
END SUMMARY.

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2. IDENTIFICATION OF ENTITIES CONCERNED.

A) THE ITALIAN MINISTRY OF DEFENSE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PURCHASES OF SHOES AND BOOTS FOR ITALIAN ARMED FORCE;
B) PROCUREMENT FOR THE STATE POLICE CORPS AND FOR ALL ITALIAN FIRE DEPARTMENTS IS ENTRUSTED TO THE ITALIAN MINISTRY OF INTERIOR. (NOTE THAT THIS MINISTRY IS NOT

REPEAT NOT COMPARABLE TO U.S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR);
C) EACH CITY MUNICIPALITY HAS ITS OWN PROCUREMENT OFFICE
GENERALLY NAMED "UFFICIO ECONOMATO" WHICH IS IN CHARGE OF ALL
PURCHASES OF APPAREL (UNIFORMS AND ACCESSORIES, INCLUDING
FOOTWEAR) FOR ITS POLICEMEN;
D) THE ITALIAN MINISTRY OF POST AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS
HANDLES ALL PURCHASES FOR MAIL DELIVERY SERVICE STAFF
THROUGHOUT ITALY;
E) THE SPECIAL GOVERNMENT POLICE CORPS "CARABINIERI"
AND "GUARDIA DI FINANZA" HAVE THEIR OWN PROCUREMENT OFFICES;
F) THERE ARE SEVERAL HUNDRED PRIVATE GUARD SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS
THROUGHOUT ITALY, A GREAT MAJORITY OF WHICH ARE VERY
SMALL. AMONG THE MOST IMPORTANT ARE VIGILANZA NOTTURNA E
DIURNA, CITTADINI DELL'ORDINE, VIA CIMAROSA 3, MILAN, AND
METRONOTTE, ISTITUTO CITTA' DI ROMA, VIA FARINI 16, ROMA.

3 - PROCEDURES AND METHODS OF PROCUREMENT

AS A GENERAL RULE THE ITALIAN MINISTRIES AND GOVERNMENT
AND MUNICIPAL AGENCIES MAINTAIN BY LAW THEIR OWN REGISTERS OF
RESPONSIBLE AND PRE-QUALIFIED POTENTIAL BIDDERS. ONLY ITALIAN
MANUFACTURERS AND EXCLUSIVE REPRESENTATIVES OF FOREIGN FIRMS
MAY BE LISTED IN THESE REGISTERS WHILE DEALERS, BROKERS AND
INTERMEDIARIES ARE NOT ENTITLED. ONLY FIRMS LISTED IN THESE
REGISTERS ARE INVITED TO BID; SEVERAL EXCEPTIONS SPECIFIED
BY CURRENT REGULATIONS DO NOT APPLY TO FOOTWEAR PROCUREMENT.
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THE EC REGULATION REQUIRING ALL MEMBER STATES TO LIBERALIZE
THE ADMITTANCE TO GOVERNMENT BIDDING TO ALL INDUSTRIES OF THE
COMMUNITY HAS NOT YET BEEN ENFORCED BY ITALY IN MANY PROCUREMENT
SECTORS, INCLUDING FOOTWEAR. THERE ARE NO RESTRICTIONS IN ITALY
AGAINST THE PURCHASE OF FOREIGN FOOTWEAR. IN THEORY, FOREIGN
MANUFACTURED FOOTWEAR MAY BE OFFERED IN A BID BY A FIRM LEGALLY
INCORPORATED IN ITALY THOUGH, IN PRACTICE, ITALIAN MINISTRIES
AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES HAVE UP TILL NOW NEGOTIATED ONLY WITH
ITALIAN SHOE MANUFACTURERS. IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT THE
LISTING IN THE VARIOUS AGENCIES' REGISTERS OF QUALIFIED
POTENTIAL SUPPLIERS IMPLIES A TECHNICAL INSPECTION BY THE AGENCY
REPRESENTATIVES TO THE MANUFACTURER'S PLANT AIMING TO VERIFY
THE TECHNICAL SUITABILITY OF THE FIRM TO MEET THE PRESCRIBED
PRODUCT STANDARDS AND PRODUCTION CAPACITY.

OF COURSE, PRIVATE GUARD SERVICES ORGANIZATIONS HAVE NO
LOW OR REGULATIONS TO AIBIDE BY AND, IN FACT, THEY HAVE THEIR
OWN PURCHASE POLICY.

4 - PROSPECTS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR U.S. FOOTWEAR SALES IN ITALY.

LOCAL SOURCES CONSULTED EXPRESSED THEIR DOUBTS ABOUT THE
PRACTICAL POSSIBILITY OF NEGOTIATING THE PURCHASE

OF U.S. FOOTWEAR BY A GOVERNMENT AGENCY.

HOWEVER, ONCE ASCERTAINED THAT THERE IS NO RESTRICTIVE LAW OR REGULATION AGAINST U.S. FOOTWEAR, IT IS BELIEVED THAT THERE ARE SEVERAL U.S. MANUFACTURERS IN A POSITION TO COMPLY WITH THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS. THIS IS THE CASE OF THOSE MANUFACTURERS WHICH ALREADY MAINTAIN AN OFFICE OR REPRESENTATIVE IN ITALY FOR THE PURCHASING OF THE LOCAL SHOE FASHION PRODUCTION WHICH THEY EXPORT TO THE U.S. IN ORDER TO DIVERSIFY THEIR DOMESTIC U.S. LINE OF PRODUCTION. IN THESE CASES THE U.S. COMPANY MIGHT CONSIDER THE ADVISABILITY OF HAVING ITS ITALIAN BRANCH EQUIPPED AND ORGANIZED FOR THE QUOTE REVERSE TRADE UNQUOTE. IN THIS FRAMEWORK THE EMBASSY WISHES TO CALL THE DEPARTMENT'S ATTENTION TO THE CURRENT PROTECTIONISM SENTIMENT AMONG EC MEMBERS ABOUT THE INCREASING IMPORTS OF

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FOOTWEAR FROM SEVERAL THIRD COUNTRIES, WHICH IS CAUSING SERIOUS COMPETITIVE PROBLEMS TO THE EUROPEAN FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY.GARDNER

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